

LYDIAS Heart Opened:
OR,
DIVINE MERCY

2

Magnified in the
Conversion of a Sinner
BY THE
G O S P E L



Being the sum of several SERMONS
Preached lately by *James Strong*, M. A.
and Minister of the Gospel.

Nullum est peccatum, quod si non fecerim tu scisti; si abstinuerim, tu iussisti, & quod tibi crediderim, gratiam tu infundisti. Augusti. Lib. Soliloquiorum, Cap. 15.

Iesus the Author and finisher of our faith, Heb. 12. 2.

That no flesh should glory in his presence; But let him that glorieth glory in the Lord, 1 Cor. 1. ult.

L O N D O N:

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To the Religious Mrs. Mary
Speke of Whitelackington, the
Author wisheth a confluence
of Spiritual blessings in our
dear Lord Jesus.

MADAM,

THese few notes following were
preacht but with an ordinary
intention, but thorow Di-
vine mercy, both with your
self and others found more than ordi-
nary reception; so oftentimes I have ob-
served when there is least of mans
strength, there is most of Gods. Many
have been too wise, and too mighty to
do Gods work; but never any too foo-
lish or too weak that have been employ-
ed by him. The Word is that spiritual
sword wherewith God wounds the hearts

The Epistle Dedicatory:

of his enemies; but as Scanderbeg's sword could do nothing without Scanderbeg's Arm; no more can this sword, unless it be weilded by the arm of Omnipotency. The reason why men do not believe our report, is, because the arm of the Lord is not revealed, Isa. 53.1. Sure I have reason to hope, that that day when we discoursed of Gods opening Lydia's, there were many other hearts opened also. My Notes which were desired by your self, and several others, I could not so easily do by transcribing them as by publishing them. And though Truth need no Apology, yet I must tell the world, that this had been as like to have slept in darkness, as many other Exercises have, had not the more than ordinary success wherewith God attended it in preaching, provoked me to this service.

Ministers are by Christ called spiritual Fishers; a busie imployment, full of toyl and danger, sith the place of fishing is not a shallow Stream, but a raging and tumultuous sea, in which after we have tired our selves, and spent
our

The Epistle Dedicatory.

our strength, nothing so breaks our hearts as this, that we labour all night and catch nothing. But Oh if at last we cast out the Net, and inclose a multitude, 'tis no wonder we are not able to bear our own joy, being astonished as Peter, Luk. 5. 9.

Madam, excuse my boldness in prefixing your Name to this small Manual. And indeed I had not had confidence, but that I presume you have with that other Mary sate too long at Christs feet, to be ashamed of Christs Truth. What inward comforts soever God hath given you by your constant and diligent attendance on his Worship, give God the glory; a dram of that sweetness that flows from the upper springs, will allay the bitterness of those Mara-like waters wherewith God drenches his dearest Servants. For our part whom God hath intrusted with the Mysteries of the Gospel, though we are on every side oppressed, yet 'tis mercy we are not suppressed under all other hardships; we have yet cause to bless God, who hath not taken the Word of Truth utterly
out

The Epistle Dedicatory.

out of our mouth. He never well understood what the calling of a Minister was, that thinks strange of any suffering in the service of Christ. It would well become a Ministers mouth what Pompey once replied to the Mariners, who dissuaded him from sailing in a storm, when he was employed for bringing provision to Rome, under a strait Siege; 'Tis necessary that Rome be relieved, but 'tis not necessary that we should live. Sure 'tis necessary that Christs sheep be fed, but 'tis not necessary that we should live.

The subject of these few Papers is of incomparable weight. The more I know my own heart and its deceits, the more jealous I am of others: Oh what a wily enemy do we carry in our own bosoms! How many treacherous reaches hath it to ruin our Immortal souls! Simon Magus seemed zealously to desire the Spirit, and would have bought it at a great price; but this poisoned his Religion, that his heart was not right in the sight of God. Ah what faint and frigid services do we bring before God,
while

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*while we serve him with our mouths,
and honour him with our lips, but re-
move our heart far from him? 'Tis true
till the heart be renewed, God will have
none of it; but when once 'tis renewed,
it makes every thing else to be accepted.
'Tis the same to all other services that
Benjamin was to his Brethren, and there
is no seeing Gods face without it. Oh
how sad were it, if at last we should
spoil all our services and sufferings by
doing good duties with bad hearts. For
preventing which danger we have cause
to bless God for the labours of many e-
gregious servants of his, who have left
the Church a rich treasury of instructi-
ons, into which if by casting my wite I
may in any measure serve the Lord Je-
sus and his People, 'tis more than suffi-
cient recompence to him, who subscribes
himself,*

Yours,

in the service of the

Gospel, J. S.



Act. 16. 14.

And a certain woman named Lydia, a
seller of Purple, of the City of Thyati-
ra, which worshipped God, heard us:
whose heart the Lord opened that she
attended to the things which Paul
spake.



S in the Evangelists we
have *ἱστορίαι Christi*, the
Records of the Acts
of Christ, while he was
conversant on the
Earth; so in this Book
we have *ἱστορίαι Apostolorum*, the Acts
of the Apostles. In which History we
have a lively representation of the
state of the Church, while she was
young and in her Cradle, her increase
and growth; what was the Doctrine of
the Apostles, with what holy boldness
they

they preached Christ in the midst of a thousand troubles and torments ; here we may read what was the fruit of the Gospel, and how it got growth in the world in despite of all opposition ; as also what is the difference between true Doctrine and false, with what malice and subtilty false Apostles oppose the true, what rest and breathings God gave his Church, and never was wanting for her protection and preservation.

This History by the consent of all bears date from the Ascension of Christ unto the first year of *Paul's* coming to *Rome*, which was the space of twenty-three years, in which we have a clear proof of the exact performance of all the Promises Christ made his Apostles ; as of sending them his Spirit, induing them with power from on high, the calling of the Gentiles, &c. But not to carry you back further than is needful, we read *ver. 9.* of this Chapter, that *Paul* by the Ministry of an Angel is called to *Macedonia*. A Vision appeared to *Paul* in the night, there stood a

man

man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come into Macedonia and help us. Where by the way we may note, that Ministers, how meanly soever esteemed in the world, are those by whom God helps his perishing people. This title the Apostle owns, a helper of his peoples joy, 2 Cor. 1. 24. Those that cannot help themselves sometimes, can yet help others, poor themselves, yet make many rich. Luther boldly told the Prince of Saxony (*Scire te velim, &c.*) I would have your Highness know you have more need of my Prayers than I have of your Protection.

Well, now it appears indeed that Christ by his death hath pulled down the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile; and that God hath put no difference between us and them; for what was Macedonia at this time when Paul was called to preach Christ there, but a mass and mixture of Ignorance and Atheism, as we and other Gentiles were without God, without Christ, and without hope, Eph. 2. 12.

Being come to Macedonia he began

to preach at *Philippi*, ver. 12. and his encouragements at first were but mean, for his auditory were only a few poor Women, ver. 13. *Gualter* on the place excellently notes, how God exercises the faith and constancy of his Servants. *Paulus vocatus per Angelum: putaret aliquis omnes ei obviam venturas, &c.* *Paul* was called by an Angel, who would not have thought, that the whole Country would have flocked to hear such a Preacher? But alas *Paul*'s hopes fail him, not one man came to hear the great Apostle, only a few poor Women, and among these God singles out one, and marks her up for mercy, v. 16. *A certain woman named Lydia, &c.*

We have here then the History of *Lydia*'s Conversion; and here again we have,

1. The Apostle preaching.
2. A weak Woman hearing.
3. The great God blessing the Sermon.

Or we have, 1. The person converted, who is several ways described.

1. By

1. By her Name to confirm the truth of the story; *Lydia*.

2. By her Sex, a Woman ; that Sex by which sin entered into the world.

3. By her employment ; a seller of Purple ; a trade (as one observes) serving not so much for necessity as for pride.

4. By the place of her abode ; a stranger, one of *Thyatira* a City of *Lydia* : all these difficulties God breaks thorough ; humane improbabilities are no prejudice to Omnipotency. Though we are by nature like the Prodigal, are run into a far Country, yet our Heavenly Father can easily bring us home.

5. She's described by her Religion, she was *σεβαστριά* *τὸν Δεῖν*, a *Worshipper of God*. A Gentile she was, yet some dark notions she had of God, which she got either by the light of nature, or by tradition from her fore-fathers, or some familiar acquaintance with the *Jews*, such another as *Cornelius* was, *Act. 10*. But whatever dark apprehensions she had of God, yet she fell far short of a Christian, for till the heart

be made good ground and purified by Faith, 'tis impossible it can bear good fruit,

2ly. We have the means of her Conversion.

1. *Paul Preaches.*

2. *Lydia heard the Word.*

3. *God makes the Word effectual, he opens her heart.*

'Tis this latter part of the verse that I design for the subject of my discourse, viz. the means of *Lydia's* Conversion, *God opened the heart of Lydia, &c.*

The first thing that I shall note is this :

Doct. I. *That 'tis Gods work to open mans heart.* God may and doth use inferiour means to knock, but none can open but himself. Gods word in Scripture is called a hammer, *Jer. 23. 29:* With this God beats and knocks at the door of our hearts, but no heart opens, unless it be held in the hand of his own Spirit; hence is that complaint of the Prophet, *Isa. 53. 1. Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed!* No wonder

der that men believe not the report of the Gospel, whilst God doth not put forth or make bare his own arm.

But for methods sake, in prosecuting the Conclusion, I shall observe this order.

1. I shall shew what's meant by the heart.
2. What 'tis to open the heart.
3. I shall prove that 'tis Gods work to open the heart.
4. Shew why God opens the heart.
5. Answer an Objection.
6. Lastly, come to Application.

1. Then let us enquire what is meant by the heart; and here to pass by the various significations of the Word in Scripture, by heart here we are to understand the rational Soul, with the faculties and affections which are therein; for as the heart is the fountain of Natural life, so 'tis of Spiritual. This is the womb wherein Christ is first formed: see *Rom. 10. 10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, &c.* Here faith is seated, here its born and breaths its first breath, *Act. 8. 37.*

Philip to the Eunuch, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou maist be baptized. There is no less in that zealous Prayer of the Apostle for his *Ephesians*, chap. 3.17. where he is upon his knees to the God of Heaven, *that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith.*

3. Let us inquire what 'tis to open the heart. In short, to open the heart is to convert a soul, or to turn a sinner from the power of darkness unto God, The word in the Original, that is here used, signifies properly to open a door: Now our hearts in Scripture as they are usually called doors, so by nature they are all shut, and that under three several locks, and God in our Conversion opens them all.

There is one lock or bar of ignorance, and this is Gods first work to open our understanding: by nature we are very darkness it self, *Ephes. 5.8.* Like that poor man born spiritually blind, thick cataracts there are upon all our eyes, unless God touch them with the hand of his Grace, and say, *Ephphata*, be opened. Now as the first
crea-

creature that God made in the first Creation was Light, *Gen. 1.* so 'tis in the new Creation he commands light to shine out of darkness. Oh the gross and rude notions and apprehensions that we have by nature of the most fundamental Truths of the Gospel! How hardly are we perswaded that by nature we are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity? tell a poor sinner that he is the servant of sin, he'll reply as the *Jews*, he was never in bondage to any man. How hardly were the Disciples themselves perswaded that Christs Kingdom was any other than an earthly Kingdom! With what difficulty were they brought to believe that their Lord and Master was risen? nor had they at last, had not Christ himself opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures, *Luk. 24. 45.* O rich mercy! O Divine work! The Preacher tells us, *'Tis a good thing for the eyes to see the light;* What a mercy is it then when Christ opens blind eyes to see the wonderful things contained in his Law, *Ps. 119. 18.*

2. The second bar or bolt that by nature is upon our hearts is stubbornness, this sticks to our wills; man by nature is a wayward and a self-will'd creature, our wills are imbondaged to sin, and though we have a will to destroy our selves, yet we have none to save our selves. Corrupt minds know no other law but their own lusts; and of these they cry out as *Israel* of their Idols, *Strangers have we loved, and strangers will we follow*, *Jer.2.25*. When Christ comes and knocks at our hearts, corruption presently rises to oppose him, we will not have this man to reign over us, *Luk. 19. 14*. But God comes with his key and opens this door also; he makes us of an unwilling to be a willing people, *Psal 110.3*. This God doth not by violence and compulsion, but in a sweet and a gracious way; he perswades *Japheth* to dwell in the Tents of *Shem*, *Gen.9.27*. God reasons us out of our rebellion, making use of that excellent gift of reason wherewith he hath adorned his creature. And thus debates the case with

with him, What reason have you to forsake me who am a fountain of living water, for broken cisterns that will hold no water? Why will you die O house of *Israel*? When all was well between God and you, was it not better with you than now? Turn you, turn you therefore from your evil ways. Thus God treats man as a reasonable creature, and takes the hint of his own gifts wherewith he hath endowed his creature.

3. There's one lock or bolt more which God opens, and that is the Affections. Man by nature cannot delight in God nor love him, but when God woos in earnest he wins our hearts, and engages all our affections to himself; so that we love nothing but God, or for God: for when once the Will is won, all is won. For the Will among other perfections of the Soul, hath the dominion over all the other faculties and affections, when therefore it hath fixt the desires, or some good that is proportionable to the wideness of the heart, it useth its liberty for the choosing

kind of such means as are most proper for the attaining of that good, and employs all the inferiour faculties for the execution of these means. In short, as soon as the Soul becomes ravish'd with the apprehension of that infinite goodness that is in God, it's earnestly drawn out to desire union with him, and participation of his glory. So that now God is the adequate object of all our love, joy and desire: and that this is no other but Gods work, see *Dent.* 30. 6. *The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, &c.* But this is more directly our next work.

3. The third thing proposed is to prove, that 'tis Gods work to open mans heart. He that made the heart can only open it, men may knock, but there's none can open and enter but God alone. We read in the *Acts*, when the Exorcists undertook to cast out unclean spirits, the Devils answered, *Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are ye?* *Act.* 19. 15. 'Tis so here, longer

ger than God owns his messengers; and stands by them, Sin and Satan tell us, God he knows, and Jesus he knows, but who are you? A lively abridgement of Gods dealing with his people in this case we have in *Cant. 5.* where Christ comes & woves his Church, and lays her open, *ver. 2.* but see what silly and sinful excuses she makes to put off Christ, *ver. 3.* *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on?* But Christ had a purpose to enter, and therefore we read *ver. 4.* *He put in his hand by the hole of the door,* and then her heart was affectioned toward him. What is this hand or finger of Christ, but the efficacy of his Spirit, whereby he puts back the bolt, or unlocks the door of her heart, before she could come and entertain him?

Christ first bores and digs thorough the heart, and makes a passage for himself to enter, and then comes in and takes possession.

The arguments for proof follow, of which the first is this:

Ref. 1. Our hearts by nature are all possessed

lest by Satan, and strongly fortified against God and Christ, whence Christ thus frames his argument; *That the strong man armed keeps the house till a stronger than he comes and bind him,* Mat. 12. 29. Satan hath the possession and will not leave his hold until he be over-powered; so much that Scripture imports, Col. 1: 13. *Who hath delivered us from the powers of darkness,* ~~ignitate~~, hath delivered us by force; so strong are his chains that nothing can break them but the hand of Omnipotency; but Oh here is the happiness of Christ's redeemed, that stronger is he that is in them, than he that is in the world! *Thanks be to God who hath made us conquerors thorough our Lord Jesus Christ,* 1 Joh. 4. 4.

Ref. 2. If God come into the heart he enters the right way, he doth not climb up the walls, nor creep in at the windows, such an entrance is not for the honour of the King of Saints, and therefore he bids us open the everlasting doors, &c. *Psal. 24.* as when a King enters a City, the gates are set wide

wide open, or thrown off their hinges, to congratulate the Kings coming, and to shew their joyful entertaining of their lawful Sovereign; such an entrance is Christs. God makes no forcible entry, doth not break the house, or enter against his peoples will; no, he sweetly subdues us, as he that opens with a key: now none but God hath a key to open those doors, *Rev. 3. 7. The Angel to the Church of Philadelphia, &c. Thus saith he that hath the key of David, which openeth and no man shutteth.* 'Tis wonderful to see the strongest hold, and most impregnable castle that from outward force is free and invincible; yet 'tis but the turning of a key that presently opens it, and gives entrance without blood or blows; so 'tis here, God oyls the lock, and turns the key, and the Soul opens.

Ref. 3. All heart-work in order to Salvation (if it be effectual) is ascribed to God. Take a few Instances.

1. God searches the heart, *Jer. 17.*
10. *It he Lord search the heart, and try the reins;* he only knows it that made it,

it, even he whose eyes are like a flame of fire, that pierce to the bottom of hell. The wiles and wickedness, the depths and deceits of this member are so many, that the Prophet cried out, *Who can know them?* Jer. 17. 9. Who? none but an Omniscient God, before whose eyes all things are naked and bare.

2. God opens our hearts to our selves (so much as we know of them savingly), *Dent. 8. 2.* God minds *Israel* of the tedious and tiresom travel of theirs thorow the Wilderness forty years, which was to humble them, and prove them, to know what was in their heart; not that God might know, but as *Austin* observes, *Tentat ut sciat, id est, ut scire nos faciat*: God tries to know (that is) to make us and others know what is in our hearts. We are by nature as great strangers to our hearts as *Hazaël*, who when the Prophet told him, *He should burn Israel's Cities with fire, slay their young men with the sword, dash the infants against the stones, and rip up the women with child*; He abhors

hors these cruelties; with this strange question, *Is thy servant a dog, that I should do this?* 2 King. 8. 12. Such barbarous cruelties seemed at this time too odious for *Hazael*; but afterward the event proved the Propheſie true, *ch. 13.* We all as little know our hearts as *Hazael*, or the depths of our own corruption.

3. God alone melts and softens the heart. *Ezek. 11. 19.* he promiſeth to take away the heart of ſtone, and give a heart of fleſh. He that turns the flint into a fountain, and fetches water out of the hard rock, is only able to break a heart of ſtone, and to make it a *Haddadrimmon*, a very valley of tears.

4. He comforts the heart. *Hof. 2. 14.* after he hath brought his Church into the wilderneſs, then he promiſeth to ſpeak to her heart, ſuch comfortable words as no man can ſpeak. When all other comforters, like *Job's*, prove miſerable comforters indeed, then God ſaith, *I, even I, am he that comforteth thee, &c.* This is Gods propriety, *Iſa. 57. 15.* *He alone revives the ſpirit of the contrite, &c.*

C

5. He

5. He new-makes the heart. As there is no mending of a crackt Bell, but it must be new cast. So 'tis with a corrupt heart, it must be new made, or there's nothing done. God begins (as it were) a new Creation when he converts a Soul. So prays the penitent Psalmist, *Psal. 45. 10. Create in me a new heart, O Lord.*

2.4. The next thing is to shew, why God opens the heart.

A. In short: It is to possess it, and to dwell in it. God hath two Houses to dwell in; the upper house is heaven, the lower house is the hearts of believers. *Isa. 57. 15. Thus saith the high and excellent one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is the holy one, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of an humble spirit.* We may here stand and wonder, that he whose nature is Majesty, whose place is Immensity, whose time is Eternity, whose life is Sanctity, whose power is Omnipotency, whose work is Mercy, whose wrath is Justice, and whose throne is Sublimity, should yet delight
to

to dwell in a poor humble and broken heart, [*Trap in Loc.*]. When *Solomon* had built that famous Temple for the worship of God, he admires the infinite condescension of God, in stooping so low as to have communion with sinful men: *1 King. 8. 27. Is it true indeed (saith he) that God will dwell in the earth?* Lo, God yet hath more intimate converse with poor believers; he indeed dwelleth not in Temples made with hands; no, the hearts of his people are Temples of the Holy Ghost, and of these he says indeed, *here will I dwell for ever.*

Obj. There is one objection against this conclusion, and 'tis this: It seems that man hath power to open his own heart; why else doth Christ Jesus bid the Church to open? in *Cant. 5. 2. Open to me my sister, &c.* And in *Rev. 3. 20. If any man open, I will enter.*

Ans. I shall answer in the words of *Peter Martyr, Dicimur aperire quatenus id Deus in nobis facit, nam is facit ut aperiamus.* We are said to open in that God makes us to open; for he

works all our works for us, and crowns them in us. *Certum est nos facere quod facimus, sed Deus facit ut faciamus.* 'Tis true, man must not be idle but active in this great work (as afterwards we shall shew) but God evermore works somewhat in the Soul, and leaves some impression by his Spirit in the heart, which stirs up an endeavour to seek after him, and to open to him. In that 5th of *Cant.* the Church confesseth Christs fingers were first in the door, before her heart was affectioned toward him. Thus no man can come to Christ, unless the Father draw him.

Use 1. And is it thus, that it is Gods work to open mans heart? It teaches then to abhor the execrable and blasphemous invention of Free-will, whereby the *Arminian* brood take the Crown from Gods head; and set it on the Creatures; robbing God of the glory of his own grace, who is both *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Author and Finisher of the work of grace in his redeemed. Neither will it help them to grant on-
ly

ly that God hath a hand in renewing us as a Moral Agent, by propounding only the goodness of Christ, and Grace, and perswading us only by rational Arguments to imbrace it; for a Moral Agent works no real effect, but God works something in us: the Church found some mirrh which Christ left behind him dropping from his fingers, before she opened to her beloved, *Cant.*

5.5. The Apostle therefore resolves all into the mighty power of God, even that power whereby he raised his Son Christ from the grave: *Eph. 1. 20*: where he prays, that his *Epheſians may know what the exceeding greatness of his power is toward them that believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him up from the grave.* Now did God only periwade Christ to rise out of the grave? no, but he put forth his almighty power for the effecting thereof: for could the Soul of Christ, which for a while was separated from his body, be brought again to that body but by the Almighty power of

God? well, the same power is exerted in raising a Soul dead in sin to the life of Grace that was exerted in raising Christ Jesus himself from the grave. The case may be thus exemplified, for as the Marigold opens her leaves to the Sun, yet the Sun first shines on it, and warms it with its beams; 'tis so with us, we open willingly our hearts to God, but God first warms our hearts with the sun-beams of his Grace; for without him we can do nothing.

Use 2. It serves for ever to humble us, to consider that natural wretchedness wherein we were born. The doors of our hearts are all shut by nature against God and Christ, fenced and fortified with strong corruptions and sinful resolutions to resist God and his dear Son. We read *Joh. 20. 19.* When Christ first appear'd to his Disciples, after his Resurrection, he came when the doors were shut. Such is our case when first he comes to visit and awaken poor lost Sinners, there's no room nor entrance for him till he make way for himself, by his own Almighty power.

This

This for ever should abase us in our greatest attainments of Grace, to consider and remember what we were by nature. 'Tis storied of *Willigis* a poor mans son, the son of a Wheeler, afterward Bishop of *Mentz*, when he was advanced to the honour of that Bishoprick, to suppress that pride which the greatness of his place exposed him to, that he caused several Wheels to be hung up about his Chamber, with this inscription, *Memento Willigis underas* : Remember *Willigis* from whence thou art, Oh that we could look back to the rock from whence we were hewn! &c. we should find that we are but the sinful slime of rebellious Parents loyns. Thus God pricks that swelling tumor of pride in *Israel* to which she was subject by her advancement, and bids her remember that a poor *Syrian* ready to perish was her father, *Deut.* 26. 5. Whatever honours or excellencies we have received by Christ; yet the Apostle tells us 'tis our duty, to remember that by nature we were children of wrath even as others, *Eph.* 2. 3.

Here's a holy art to make the elder brother Corruption to serve the younger Grace; a serious remembrance of our natural vileness may keep the soul humble in our greatest attainments.

Use 3. It informs us of the piercing power of Gods Word, however weak and contemptible in the eyes of carnal reason. Its sound is heard in the ear, but its force is felt in the heart. *Paul* preaches and *Felix* trembles; *Peters* Sermon prickt the *Jews* to the heart, *Act.* 2.37. This was the fruit of Christs dealing with his Church, *Cant.* 5.4. as soon as she felt his hand in the hole of the door, her very heart was affectioned toward him; justly therefore 'tis called a sharp two-edged sword, &c. *Heb.* 4. 12. *Elisba* had his sword as well as *Jehu*. And God hews his enemies by his Prophets; and slays them by the words of their mouth. This sword is like *Saul's* it, never returns empty; if it doth not destroy our sins, it will destroy our souls.

Use 4. It cautions us against a mistake. When we hear that 'tis Gods work

work to open mans heart, we are apt to conclude that God expects nothing from us. Take we heed we do not thus abuse the grace of the Gospel, God delights to improve his own gifts, he hath endowed man with the gift of Reason, and saves him as a Reasonable Creature. And therefore though all means of Grace have their virtue and efficacy from God, and he alone is the principal cause and author of our Salvation. Yet God expects when he perswades that we consent, when he wooes by his Word that we yield, lest striving with our Maker, we provoke him to deal with us as he did with the old World, when for their contumacy and impenitency he resolved, that his Spirit should no longer strive with man, *Gen. 6. 3.*

Use 5. The next Use therefore shall be of Counsel (or rather Command) in the name of the great God of Heaven and Earth, that when God by his Word calls to us from Heaven, and bids us open, that with a holy readiness we open those everlasting doors. To provoke

voke you to which duty I shall add these Considerations.

Arg. 1. So long as our hearts are shut against God, we our selves are shut out of all comfortable communion with God. God delights in none but where he is entertained: mark that Scripture, *Rev. 3. 20. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him.* I'll feast that man with my Presence, my Grace, my Comforts; this man only shall know indeed what is that plenty, rarity and variety which is in that feast of fat things that I have made in my holy mountain. To such I will make known my self; I'll take them into my imbraces, feed and feast them with my Promises, they shall see my face and know by experience what 'tis to have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son. Now pray consider, could you be content to live a few years in the World, and to hear only what a blessed thing it is to enjoy the love of God, and the light of his Countenance, the sweet and soul-ravishing Comforts of his spirit,

rit, and yet to live and die and go to your graves and never know nor taste any of this spiritual sweetness? this must be your case if your hearts be not opened.

Arg. 2. Consider that God yet offers to open your hearts, though we perhaps have stopt our ears thousands of times, yet he once more stands at the door and knocks, and cries, open, open. And I make my appeal to your own Consciences (if there be any life or tenderness in them) whether you find not God striving to come in, while by the hammer of his Word he knocks and begs you by his Messenger to give your hearts to him. Is not God at this instant convincing some that he is a lost perishing creature in himself? is he not shewing you the incomparable excellency of Christ, and his al-sufficiency to save Sinners? Oh how think you to escape if you neglect so great Salvation! you have heard of that fearful resolution of God against the impenitent old World, when by the preaching of *Noah* a hundred years together God had perswaded

ded them to repent, yet all to no purpose? what says God at last? *My spirit shall not alway strive with man.* Oh when God strives with us in mercy, and we strive with God by impenitency 'tis sad! *Wo to him that thus strives with his maker.*

Well, whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our instruction. If we will not take example from the old world that is past, be sure we shall make example to the new World that is to come, *Isa. 45. 9.*

Arg. 3. Consider to whom 'tis we are to open, why 'tis to Christ, *Open to me my sister,* &c. an Emphatick word, and as *Ezekiel's* Wheels were full of eyes, so is this word full of motives: To me that am thy Saviour, thy King, thy Priest, thy Prophet, thy Bridegroom, thy Beloved, thy Brother; Ah who would not open to such a one? As *Laban* said to *Abrahams* servant, *Come in thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without?* *Gen. 24. 31.* so should we say when he comes to our door; yea, as *Lot* pressed the two Angels great-

greatly when they seemed strange, and overcame them with his importunity, that they came in, *Gen. 19. 3.* so should we.

Arg. 4. Consider Gods end in opening of the heart, 'tis to dwell there; God dwelleth not in Temples made with hands, but as he hath chosen Heaven for his glorious Presence, so he hath chosen the heart for his gracious Presence, *Isa. 57. 16.* Neither will God come in empty, he brings Salvation and all other blessings with him; thus Christ told *Zachew*, *Luk. 19. 9.* *This day is salvation come to thy house.* There's nothing lost by entertaining this guest, where he comes his reward is with him; if *Obed Edom's* house were blessed for entertaining Gods Ark, how blessed is that heart that opens and entertains God himself?

2. But some may object that Believers have opened already, and that Christ dwells in them by faith, and sith they have good evidences that they are such, what need more ado for them?

A. There

4. There are divers degrees and measures of Grace whereby Christ dwells in his Elect; and though we have already opened to him, yet 'tis our duty to open wider still. Our case is like that of the blind-man whom Christ cured in the Gospel, who after the first touch saw men as trees walking; but Christ touches his eyes again, and then he saw plainly, *Mar. 8. 25.* 'Tis just so with the best of Gods Saints. Alas we have but a little of the Power and Spirit of Christ at our first acquaintance with him, and therefore we must evermore widen our hearts, and make more room to entertain him.

Arg. 5. Consider the many engagements God hath laid upon us to open our hearts to him.

God hath opened his heart to us, he hath not lockt up the Mysteries of the Gospel in secrecie? No, as we read of *Sampson* for the love he bore to *Delilah* he told her all his heart; so hath God to us, he hath kept nothing from us that may make us wise to Salvation.

tion. The Apostle tells the Church of Ephesus, That he had shewed them all the counsel of God, Act. 20. 27. And that the will of God was never revealed to other ages as now it is revealed to us, Eph. 3. 5.

2. God hath opened Heaven to us, that for sin was shut against all *Adams* posterity : for as *Adam* sinning was driven out of an Earthly Paradise, so was he also out of the Heavenly Paradise ; and Christ came from Heaven, and suffered death for us that he might open a way for us again into Heaven, therefore he is called *our forerunner*, Heb. 6. 20. *Whither our forerunner is entered in for us.* The Holy of Holies in the Sanctuary was a type of Heaven, this holy place was severed or parted from the body of the Sanctuary by a veil: at Christs death we read this veil rent in twain, Mat. 17. 51. hereby shewing us, that Christ by his death hath made an open way for us into the Holy of Holies in Heaven ; God hath paved us a way in the blood of his Son, and now we may come with boldness.

3. God

3. God opens his ears to our prayers, *Isa. 37. 17.* his eyes to distresses, *Exod. 3. 7.* *I have surely seen the affliction of my people Israel, which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, &c.* He hears his peoples prayers, and their enemies threats; he hears the railing of *Rabshekah*, the cursing of *Shimei*, and the least injuries that are plotted against the just, shall not we open our heart to him?

4. He hath opened hell and the grave for us: We read when Christ suffered, at the Resurrection many dead bodies of the Saints which slept arose with him, *Mat. 27. 53.* to assure us that he hath the keys of hell and of death, and that he will not leave the dust of his Saints for ever under the power of death; No, *I know thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave, &c.* *Psal. 16.* The grave (until Christs Resurrection) was an impregnable hold, and from thence had been no redemption, had not Christ opened it for our deliverance.

5. God opens his hand to us daily
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in the gifts of his bounty, God comes loaden with plenty of all good things. He openeth his hand and filleth every living thing with goodness; whatever wants the poor creature sustains God alone supplys them all. Oh shall God open so much to us, and shall we not open our hearts to him? it would be horrid ingratitude, should we thus requite the Lord.

The duty though most reasonable yet it's difficult, these Directions improved may make it easie.

Direct. 1. Be faithful and diligent in searching into the state of your hearts, know that there are a thousand deceits that lodg and lurk in the hearts of the sons of men. The *Psalmist* tells us, *That the ungodly boasteth of his hearts desire.* When *Solomon* assures us, *That the soul of the wicked desireth evil,* *Prov. 21. 10.* O let not your treacherous hearts deceive you, pose your selves with such serious Questions as these: Heart what is thy case? how is it with thee, tell me faithfully, whether thou art the old heart, or the new?

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whose Image dost thou bear, Christs or Satans? Art thou a dead heart, or a living? hast thou been ever new-made or no? hast thou new affections, new motions and desires or no? tell me, hath Christ taken possession of thee or not? These would be close Questions if our hearts were held closely to answer them. *Know you not* (saith the Apostle) *that Christ is in you except you are reprobates?*

2. If you find not Christ within you, mourn over your empty hearts: What a lamentation did *Mary* make when she found the grave empty, when she sought Christ, *Ah they have taken away my Lord, &c.* Much more reason have we to break our hearts with sorrow, if upon a serious search we find not Christ in our heart: Oh cry out, Sin and Satan have robbed me of my dearest Saviour, no tokens or footsteps of Christ to be seen in me.

3. Seek Christ diligently, imitate the Church in a like case, who sought Christ Jesus at home and abroad; by night upon her bed she sought him whom

whom her soul loved, arose and went about the City and enquires of the Watchmen, and all to find her Beloved, *Cant. 1. 5.*

4. Be gleaning in Gods field; the Ordinances of God are a spiritual harness, where you may fill your empty sacks, as *Joseph* did his Brethrens. *Ruth* gleaned in *Boaz's* field among the sheaves and reapers, and so returned laden. Christs Ordinances are like *Israels* Camp, where the Heavenly Manna falls. If your souls are sick of love to Christ, here he's present to refresh you with flagons of spiritual liquor far better than wine. Take then Christs own counsel, get forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed your kids beside the shepherds tents, *Cant. 1. 8.* The Prophet calls the Word a hammer; come under this hammer and there's hope of opening. Again, the word is Christ's voice, and 'tis worth our observation, that the Church first cried out, *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh*, before she opened, *Cant. 5. 2.*

5. Affect your hearts with the incomparable excellencies of Christ. We are all in a deep sleep by nature, and who will rise and open to one whom he doth not know? Observe when Christ solicited his Church, she had never stirred out of that deep slumber she was in, and opened to him, had she not been thorowly convinced of those rare endowments that were in him; witness that rare description she makes of him from the 10.v. to the end of that *Cant. 5.* the daughters of *Jerusalem* wondered she troubled her self so much about her Beloved, to whom she replys, *Do you wonder, my beloved is white and ruddy, and the chiefest among ten thousand, &c.*

6. Labour for Faith as for Heaven it self; as Faith empties the heart of sin, so it opens the heart to Christ: unbelief bolts the door against him, but Faith unlocks it. Christ could not do many mighty works in *Nazareth* because of their unbelief; away then with all sinful fears. Though we have many misgivings within us, yet lament them
them

them with bitterness, and cry out I believe, Lord help my unbelief. Mind that blessed promise, *Mat. 21. 22. Whatsoever you ask believing, it shall be given you.*

7. Lastly, get your hearts warmed with the grace of Love; though they are cold by nature, yet beg a spark of this Heavenly fire from Heaven. Love is of a dilating and widening nature. it makes room in the heart for Christ, read *Joh. 14. 23. If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will come to him, and we will dwell with him.* Can we possibly bolt the door, and keep out him whom we love? no, the love of God will constrain us to let him in, and entertain him, *2 Cor. 5. 14.* The word there used signifies to streighten, or to keep in; but that is from other things as from sin, and the world, that so the soul may be the more free for God: Oh then that the measure of our love to Christ might be beyond measure! this one rule, if practised, would do the work for all, God never parts from that soul where there

is but love to entertain him.

Use 6, Lastly, its matter of unspeakable comfort to as many as (with *Lydia*) have their hearts opened; Oh what heavenly peace and security, what rivers of spiritual pleasure and joy should overflow our hearts as soon as God hath opened them! Hath God opened thy heart? know that God hath brought Heaven into thy heart now, and the same God will bring thee into Heaven shortly. When *Lydia's* heart was opened, how was her joy increased, and her affections enlarged; we read she sought acquaintance with the Apostles, she could no longer be a stranger to them who had been the instruments of her Conversion, but besought them earnestly, saying, *If you have judged me faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there, and she constrained us.* Her heart could not hold her comfort but must now impart some of it to them, from whom she had received it. If any of us have shared with *Lydia* in the Grace of the Gospel, make a little room

room more in these narrow hearts of yours to entertain some part of her comforts also.

Q. You will tell me you would willingly, but you doubt whether your heart be opened or no?

A. For your resolution, you may know that your heart is opened by God. If you find your love, and your affections carried out to God above all things, in *Ezek. 44. 2.* where the Prophet describes the New Jerusalem. We read the Lord brought him to the East-gate of the Sanctuary, and said unto him, *This gate shall be shut, and shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it, because the Lord God of Israel hath entered by it.* This gate is a figure of the heart, which being once opened to God must be opened to nothing else. We may know then that our heart is opened to God, when 'tis shut to all vanities in the world, God will have all the heart or none, nothing must share with him; a heart possessed by God loves nothing but God or for God.

2. If our heart be opened to God, it will cast out all sin; as when the graves were opened at Christs death, we read they sent forth their dead, the dead bodies arose, as soon as the graves were opened; so 'twill be in a soul that is opened to Christ, it will cast out all dead works, works of sin and darkness: *If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin.*

3. A heart opened to Christ will send forth all sorts of spiritual Graces, duties and performances: as 'tis with the Earth while it lies bound up and frozen in the Winter, it's barren and brings forth nothing; but as soon as the Spring warms it with the Sun, and opens it, it sends forth all sweet herbs and flowers; even thus we may know that Christ is within us by the Graces and gracious performances that are without. Christ is a living root, a root that never ceases, but like *Aaron's rod* is always blooming and blossoming.

4. Where the heart is opened to Christ all is opened, all the parts and powers of the whole man God; is so
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entertained into one part, that he is kept out of none, 'tis all fuitable where God hath opened the heart. A taste you may have in these Particulars.

1. There's an open ear to hear the Word of God, till God hath taken possession of the heart; we are like the deaf Adder that stop our ears to the voice of Gods sweet charmers, *Isa. 29.*

18. In that day shall the deaf hear the words of this Book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and darkness. (1) The blind and deaf Gentiles, shall in the days of the Gospel be both enlightned and enlivened with saving knowledg: whensoever God commands men to return from iniquity, he openeth their ears to discipline, *Job 36. 10.* Gods Word comes with authority and makes its own way to make room for Christ when once he hath taken hold of the heart.

2. There's an open eye to see the will and mind of God; we are all by nature as well blind as deaf in things that are spiritual, but God makes the eyes of the blind to see as well as the ears

ears of the deaf to hear, *Isa. 35. 5.* (that is) God so far enlightens our understandings, that the mysteries of Salvation are revealed and made clear to us. Gods Word comes now with a Commission, when it goeth forth it gives light and understanding to the simple. Gods redeemed shall never miscarry thorow ignorance. They have an unction from the holy one and know all things, *1 Joh. 2. 20.* (1) Whatsoever is necessary to Salvation; in lesser errors Believers may be intangled, but in Fundamentals they shall never. If any man be a doer of Gods will, he shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God, *Joh. 7. 17.*

3. There's an open hand to do the work of God, such whose hearts God hath opened are not only hearers of the Word but doers also; such a one shews his Faith by his Works, you may see what such a one is within by what he is without. Like *Noah's Ark* he is pitcht within and without, there's grace within and grace without, he shews by a good conversation his works in meekness and wisdom, *Jam. 3. 13.*

4. Lastly,

4. Lastly, where God hath opened the heart, there is also an open mouth to praise God. This is added to compleat the work, *Isa. 35. 6.* God promises to make the tongue of the dumb to sing. Such souls whom God hath visited in mercy are not able to conceal either Gods mercies or their own comforts; no, they must speak of the loving-kindness of God, though it be before Kings. They must bear a part with *Zachary*, though once dumb yet as soon as his tongue was loosed cried out, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who hath visited and redeemed his people*, *Luk. i. 68.*

And so much of the Author of *Lydia's* Conversion, or that great work of God in opening *Lydia's* heart; next let us consider the means whereby'twas wrought, she attended to the things which *Paul* spake.

What this attention of *Lydia* was, is worth inquiry, προσέχεν τοῖς λαλῶντι. The word here translated *attention*, signifies properly to give heed, προσέχον, *scil. animum*, to apply the heart or mind to a thing. In

In the New Testament, the word is used in a double relation :

1st. To things hurtful.

2^{ly}. To things useful.

1. To things hurtful, in *Mat. 7.15.* *Beware of false Prophets, ἀποστόλοι, &c.* The same word that is used here (that is) take heed that you avoid them, lest you are insnared by them.

2. The word is used in relation to things useful, as in *Act. 8. 6.* *The people gave heed to the things that Philip spake, προσέχον, &c.* the same word that is used here; so *Lydia* attended or gave heed, or applied her heart to the things spoken by *Paul*.

This heedful hearing is opposed to all manner of slighting, opposing, or turning away our ears from hearing the Word : such hearers we read of *Acts 13. 45.* *The Jews filled with envy spake against the things spoken by Paul, contradicting and railing on them.* And such were those bidden guests that were invited to the Wedding, that made light of it, *Mat. 22. 4, 5.* Well then, there was both an attention of
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the ear, and an intention of the mind and heart in this hearing of *Lydia*.

And this being the sense, it offers us these three Conclusions.

D. 1. That the preaching of the Word is the ordinary means of converting souls.

D. 2. That a serious firm and fixt applying our hearts and minds to the Word of God is required by God of them that hear it.

D. 3. That such an attention can never be given to the Word preached but by a special work of Grace. *Lydia* might have heard *Paul* preach, but she had never heard them if God had not first opened her heart.

D. 1. That the preaching of the Word is the ordinary means of converting Souls. 'Tis true the power of God is unlimited, and not bound to means; God could have taught the Eunuch without *Philip*, he could have converted *Paul* without *Ananias*, instructed *Cornelius* without *Peter*, and have opened *Lydia's* heart without *Paul*. But the Ministry of the Word is that means
which

which the wisdom of God hath chosen and sanctified for this great work. This is the sum of the Apostles Climax, *Rom. 10. 14. How shall they call on him on whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a Preacher? And at last determines the Question with this conclusion, That faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

To prevent any curious questions, why 'tis this: The Apostle resolved all into the good pleasure of God, *1 Cor. 1. 21. For seeing the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that do believe.*

Q. But some may wonder how so weak a means should work so great effects?

A. All is from the Spirit of Christ; for 'tis the office of Christ not only to open the will of his Father, and to reveal the mysteries of Salvation (which he doth by his Prophetical Office) but
also

also to be present when the Word is preached, and by his Spirit to teach the heart inwardly what it is taught outwardly by the Word. And now also he exercises his Kingly Office in making his enemies become his subjects; here he lays us at his feet, whilst his Word like a sword pierces our hearts, making us throw down our arms, those weapons of sin wherewith we have opposed him; here Christ gets a glorious, and yet an easie conquest; for against his power there is none stands. *Assoon as they hear they shall obey*, Psal. 18.44. Now that the efficacy of the Word depends on the operation of the Spirit is evident from *Act. 2.* before those Converts were pricked at the heart, &c. we read that the Spirit fell on them like a mighty rushing wind, *v. 2.* cease then to wonder when we see such mighty effects wrought by the Gospel, sith 'tis not we that speak but the Spirit of our Father which speaketh in us, *Mat. 10. 20.*

Use 1. Wo then to all opposers and contemners of Preaching and Preachers.

chers. Alas who are those that are now accounted the troublers of Israel but such as are guilty of *Elijah's* crime, that indeed are zealous for the *Lord God of host, &c.* who deny themselves to oppose that torrent of sin and corruption that like another deluge is like to overrun the Nation, and for this they must be fed with *Micajah's* hard Commons even with bread and water of affliction.

Another generation of prophane and profligate Professors swarm every where in the World, who nauseate this Heavenly Manna, and condemn sound Doctrine, because 'tis common. Ah we live in a Gospel-glutted-Age wherein wickedness and wantonness are the best requital wherewith we requite the Lord for his choicest Mercies. Thus with *Jeshurun* we are grown fat and kick.

Oh that a people so choicely taught and instructed from Heaven should at last scorn the counsels of their Heavenly Father! That our Religion should be lost in Atheism, and that the preaching

ing of Christ crucified should become a reproach among us. There is one Scripture that I would fasten on your thoughts to prevent this sin in some, which deserves to be repented in others, so *Heb. 2. 2, 3.* If the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast and every Transgression deserved a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation? Our guilt and ingratitude increaseth with our injoyments; view the comparison in a few particulars.

1. We have a more excellent Ministry than they under the Law, Angels were Ministers of the Law, but Christ of the Gospel; now the threatnings of Angels, if despised, were severely punished; and shall not the threatnings of the Son of God? For that God who in former Ages spake unto us by his Prophets, hath in these last times spoken to us by his own Son, *Heb. 1. 2.* Well, let us hear Christ arguing himself from this very Topick. *The Queen of the South shall rise in judgment against the men of this generation, for she came*
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from the uttermost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here.

And again, *the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment, &c.* Mat. 12.41,42. Oh what will be our case, who set not so high a price on Christ as that Queen did on *Solomon*! when Christ and his Gospel come home to our door and beg entertainment: 'Tis the Language of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5.20. *We pray you in Christs stead that you be reconciled to God.*

2. The very matter of preaching excels that which was of old, for such mysteries are revealed by the Gospel, as in other Ages were not known, *Eph.* 3.5. The Law made nothing perfect but the bringing in a better hope did, *Heb.* 4.7. in this respect the Gospel is rather called Salvation than the Law; *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*

3. The manner of revealing the Gospel is far more clear and effectual, the Types, Prophecies, and Promises under the Law, were dark and obscure;

now

now *Moses* face is unveiled, and *Salvation* by *Christ* clearly revealed ; so that a clearer *Manifestation* can never be expected while the *World* lasts. Those dark and enigmatical *Mediums* thorow which the *Jews* looked to see a *Saviour*, are now taken away, and we behold as in a glass the glory of *God* &c. 2 *Cor.* 3. 18, 19.

4. The *Ratification* of the *Gospel* was stronger : Their's indeed was *Thunder* and *Lightning*, *Burning* and *Blackness* , with other great signs to confirm it's *Authority* , *Exod.* 16. 19. But yet the *Gospel* was confirmed by more and greater miracles. One instance shall be instead of many, for never was there any that restored sight to the blind (at least by his own *Power*,) but only *Christ*: see the *Testimony* of the blind man cured, *Joh.* 9. 32. *Since the World began was it not heard, that any one opened the eye of one that was born blind.* Nay, *Christ* cured *Souls* as well as *Bodies*; this is evident by that gracious pardon which he gave to him that was cured of the *Palsy*, *Mat.* 9. 2. *Be*

of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee:
 Oh yet that that Christ whom we
 preach should be a stone of stumbling
 and a rock of Offence to disobedient and
 unbelieving ones! who yet to them
 which believe is the only Foundation,
 that rock of Ages, the wisdom of God
 and the Power of God! how many
 have their faces tanned and sullied only
 under the bright beams of the Sun of
 Righteousness; who was given as to
*enlighten every one that comes into the
 World?*

Secondly, let us all learn our duty,
 which we shall comprize in these two
 things.

1. To prize the Word preached,
 and acknowledg it to be that *Manna*
 upon which God intends to keep us,
 while (with *Israel*) we are in the wil-
 derness till we come to that Celestial
Canaan. We read in *Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13,*
&c. He when he ascended, gave some
 to be Apostles, some Prophets, some
 Evangelists, and some Pastors, and
 Teachers; &c. For the repairing of the
 Saints, for the Work of the Ministry,
 till

till we all meet in a perfect man, &c.
Two circumstances are here especially considerable.

1. When Christ gave us this divine gift of preaching the Gospel: 'Twas *when he ascended to Heaven*, as Kings when they are crowned give rich gifts to their favourites; So did Christ, when he was crowned in Heaven, he gave this rich invaluable gift to the Sons of men.

2. Let us consider why he gave it, 'twas for the *repairing of the Saints*; The Gospel was never intended to save all, but the Saints only: *As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.* Now even the Saints have their Spiritual ruines and decays; their minds are clouded with darkness; their Wills are crooked, and their Affections unsatisfied. These are the ruines which God repairs by the Gospel, when he renews us by Grace, and restores his own Image in us; submit we then to the ordinance of the great God of Heaven. Though God create man at first without the help of Angels, yet he doth

not recreate or renew his Image in us, without the Ministry of men, *Act. 26.*
 18. we read *Paul* was sent by preaching to open blind eyes, *that they might turn from darkness unto light, and from the Power of Satan unto God.*

2. Improve the preaching of the Gospel; and know that as the body cannot live without Bread, no more can the Soul without the Word; obey it in all things, as well it's precepts as it's promises: 'twas given to be a directory to our lives, a light to our minds, life to our Souls. Oh buy the truth and never sell it, study to be cast into a Gospel-mould! Oh that the Word preached to you might be a Word implanted in you! that we could say of you all, as *Paul* of his *Romans*, *So we preach and so you believe.* This would fill our hearts with comfort, and make us confess as he of his *Thessalonians*; *Though we preach the Gospel in much affliction, yet with much joy.* O give us a share in his glorying, that we may say, *Thanks be to God that you were once the Servants of sin, but you have*

have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered to you. But we come to the next Conclusion.

Doct. 2. That a serious firm and fixt applying our hearts and minds to the Word preached, is required by God of all that hear it; or shorter, thus, 'Tis the attention of the heart to the Word of God that is only saving. This is that duty which is so often prest and inculcated in the Scripture, *Deut. 6. 6. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart;* and again, *Deut. 32. 46. Set your hearts to all the Words which I testifie against you, & set your hearts;* that is saith A Lap. *mentem apponite et attendite, apply your heart and hear, &c.* bodily Service is but the body of our Service, 'tis the Service of the Soul, that is the Soul of our Service. This was *Lydia's* attention, which hath made her name smell like a sweet perfume in Scripture, a rare compound which consists of these several ingredients.

1. This saving attention to the Word implies a serious consideration of the things

things spoken, *2 Tim. 2. 7.* Consider what I say, &c. 'Tis a rule, *litteræ Principum ter legenda*: Kings letters ought to be read threetimes-over. Gods Messages must not be slighted, for his Word is no vain Word, as many did by the Angels Messages. 'Tis said, having heard the Messages, *she pondered all these things in her heart, &c.* So should we, Gods Word must not be born and dy the same hour; no, it must be a living and an abiding Word: God spake once, but the Psalmist heard it twice, *Psal. 67. 11.* *Physick* can never work, nor meat nourish unless it abides sometime in the body, nor can the Word which is both meat and medicine to our Souls.

2. The next thing required to this saving attention is a right understanding of the Word: these two Christ joins together, *Mat. 15. 10. hear and understand.* 'Tis the mind and meaning of God that we must chiefly attend; Christs own disciples oft times took offence at his Words, when upon better information they found them to be Words of

of truth and life. This was the sad effect of that precious doctrine, *Joh. 6. 53. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you.* Carnal reason knew not how to understand this Mysterie, and therefore presently suggests this incredulous question, *how can this man give us his flesh to eat :* and what a sad effect followed on this mistake, we read *v. 66. From that time, many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with Jesus.*

3. There must be a faithful retaining or remembrance of it; our memories are false and slippery like hour-glasses, no sooner filled at one end, but they run out at the other; riven, and chinky vessels that leak out the Water of life, strive we all we can to make them Treasuries of Divine Truth, and lay up the Word of God in them as in a store-house: *Thy word have I hid in my heart,* (saith the Psalmist) *that I might not sin against thee.* To promote this Work we should do as a man that hath hid a treasure, he goes often and sees whether

ther it be safe; so should we often turn in upon our memories, and ask them as Christ the disciples, *do you not remember the five Loaves*, &c. and the rather because we have a dangerous and subtle enemy, who watches where we keep our treasures, and unless we watch it narrowly will steal it from us.

4. We must entertain it with love, *2 Thes. 2. 10. Because they received not the truth in the Love thereof, therefore God shall give them up to suffer strong delusions*; want of Love to the Word is the first step to Apostacy. See a Soul seasoned with this Grace of Love, in *Jeremy, Chap. 15. 16. Thy words were found and I did eat them, and they were unto me the joy and rejoycing of my heart*. God makes his appear to the Conscience of the experienced Christian, *Mic. 2. 7. Are not my words good to him that walketh uprightly?* Yes Lord, so good that the Soul that tastes and digests them, confesses they are *sweeter than hony or the hony-comb*. If the mysteries of the Gospel are so
sweet

sweet and sacred, that the Angels themselves desire to pry into them, how dearly then should dust and ashes love them! Oh that we could say as the *Psalmist*; *How do I love thy Law? all the day long is my study in it.*

5. The Word must be heard with Faith; every hearer is not a profitable hearer. As hearing distinguishes Professours from the Profane, so believing distinguisheth the upright from hypocrites. *Heb. 4. 2. The word preached did not profit them that heard it, because it was not mixt with faith:* and again, *'Tis the Power of God to salvation, but to them that do believe, Rom. 1. 16.* Though it be true, that without the Word there can be no Faith, (*for Faith cometh by hearing*); yet withal without Faith the Word hath no power. As the Brazen Serpent was of no use to them that did not look on it; so 'tis in this case; *Look therefore unto me and be you saved:* when we come to hear, we should all think that we hear God speaking to us as he did to *Ezekiel, Son of man eat that thou findest, Ezek. 3. 1.*

Faith

Faith is the life of the Soul : As there heat in a dead-mans mouth never doth good, no more doth the Word in a faithless hearer. 'Tis Faith that makes every part thereof powerful and effectual, its precepts to direct us, its threatenings to terrifie us, its promises to comfort us. Take but one instance in *Jonah*, 3.5. we read that the men of *Nineveh* believed God, (1) upon hearing *Jonah* his sermon, *and then they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth.* Faith is that living womb into which when the seed of the Word falls, it becomes a fruitful mother of all spiritual Graces.

6. Lastly, to a saving attention there is required a universal obedience, and a hearty resignation of our selves. This was the Apostles Crown and Joy, that his *Romans* had obeyed from the heart *that form of doctrine that they had received*, Rom. 6. 17. and this is Gods end in giving you his Word, that it should *bring every thought into the Obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. We should take heed of hearing with uncircumcised

circumcised ears and stubborn hearts. The sence of Gods mercy in revealing his Will, and the Conscience of our duty to obey it, should make us so ready to every thing that he commands, that a little child should lead us, *Isa. 11. 6.*

Use 1. Hence first is condemned that visible listlessness and supine negligence that many discover in this duty of hearing. Can we chuse but tremble to hear that curse that is threatned against every one that doth Gods work negligently, *Isa. 48. 10.* and yet alas, how many of us hear as if we did not hear, and mind no more the word of life, than if we were hearing an Idle tale! The Church hath ever been pestered with such professors. God complains of them, *Ezek. 33. 32. Son of man, this People come and sit before thee, as my People use to do, &c.* Oh hear once more and tremble at that dreadful sentence which Christ breathed against incredulous and refractory hearers, in *Job. 12. 48. He that refuseth me and heareth not my words, bath*
one

one that judgeth, even the word that I have spoken, the same shall judg him. Sure it will be a double damnation to be condemned by the Gospel, yet thus it will be, if it be not *the saviour of life to life*, it will be *the saviour of death to death*. And what greater equity than this do not such judg themselves unworthy everlasting life, that leave their hearts behind them when they come to hear it? doth not that malefactor deserve to dye, when his pardon is sent him freely, that has it read as if he were a-sleep? These messengers that were sent by *Benhadad* to make peace with *Ahab* (when distressed by him) will rise in judgment against such drowsy hearers. We read the men took diligent heed if they could catch any word of him that they might take hold of for their hope; and they did so, for when they arrested him thus; *Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee let me live, the King of Israel answered, is he yet alive? he is my brother:* and they took hold of that word, and ecchoed it back to him, saying, *thy brother Benhadad.*

Use 2. Attend then as *Lydia* did, that you may be saved as *Lydia* was, whatsoever you do (saith the Preacher) *do it with all thy might, Eccles. 9. 10.* Judg of the importance of the duty by the earnest injunction of the great God of heaven : *settle it in your hearts, Luk. 21. 14.* and why ? for the water of life will run out or run besides us, if we do not hear with a holy heedfulness, *Heb. 2. 1. Wherefore we ought to give diligent heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip.* The Greek Word *παρὰ πρὸς* signifies either to run besides, as water that flows besides a place; or else it signifies to run thorough a thing as water thorow a sieve : well, the word preached, if it be not heedfully heard will never stay in us, but be lost and run out. This is damage sufficient, a loss that is irreparable, none indeed like this loss when we receive the Grace of God in vain. For directions I shall refer you to what hath bin already said, a word or two by way of motive.

1. To

1. To encourage us to this heedful hearing of the Word, consider that it is a complexive duty, a duty which is so acceptable to God, that under it are comprehended all duties of Religion, *Isa. 55. 3. Hear and your Souls shall live,* life and death enter in the same way: As death entered into the world by the ear, by our first Parents listning to that old Manflaier; so God hath ordained that life should enter by the same door: *The dead shall hear the voice of the son of God, and they that hear shall live, Joh. 5. 25.* Oh you that love heaven, love hearing too!

2. The most eminent Saints of God have ever bin observed to be the most diligent and attentive hearers, *Luk 4. 20. We read while Christ Jesus was preaching, the eyes of all his hearers were fastned on him;* a good way, not only to prevent distractions but also to raise our affections; our hearts are wily, and will give us the slip. It is our wisdom by all ways imaginable to ingage our hearts in hearing, and lay bonds upon them to hold them to such

an attention as becomes us. 'Tis storied of *Englands* second *Josiah*, that peerless Prince *Edward* the sixth, that he usually stood at sermon and took notice all the while he was a-hearing.

3. Consider, that we never read of more bitter complaints from God, than when he complained of heartless hearers in *Psal.* 81. 13. *O that my People would have hearkned to me, &c.* but my People would not hear my voice, and *Israel* would none of me; and in *Psal.* 95. 10. *Forty years long was I grieved with this generation and said; It is a People that err in heart, for they have not known my ways: they knew, but not practically, their ears were uncircumcised, and their hearts unsanctified. O fearful judgment to have ears that we should not hear, &c.* Thus God punishes one sin with another, *Rom.* 11. 8. who can read without astonishment, *Jer.* 7. from the 13. v. to the 17. *I arose up early and spake unto you, but you would not hear, therefore I will do unto you as unto Shilo, &c.*

F

read

Read it thorow, I forbear the application, desiring if ever you remembered a lesson, you would remember this, and never give your Teachers cause to complain. Oh we have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nothing!

4. Lastly, To close all carry with you *St. James* caution, be not forgetfull hearers of the Word, but doers also: he hears aright (saith one) that doth not contradict his hearing by his life; otherwise you will be as a man that sees his face in a glass and turns away, and forgets what manner of man he was. O wash off those spots which this glass discovers! so hear the Word of Christ, that you may conform to the will of Christ, *Lydia's* attention was the first step to Salvation. Hear as she did, and you will be happy as she was.

So much Briefly of this Work of Grace which God wrought in opening the heart of *Lydia*. Reader, let me carry thee one step farther, and shew

shew thee Gods end in this Work,
or why he thus opens the heart. And
that is, that himself may enter and
dwell in it, *Ephes. 3. 17. That Christ
may dwell in your hearts.*

F 2

Ephes.

~~show aid in the day of need~~
~~but I fear the Lord~~
 Ephes. 3. 17. the former part
 of the Verse.

*That Christ may dwell in your hearts
 by faith.*

THese words are part of a zealous prayer which the Apostle puts up to God in the behalf of his dear *Ephesians*.

The prayer begins in the 14th. ver. where we find ~~Pant~~ upon his knees, begging Grace for them of the Father of Mercies: *For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of mercies, &c.*

The blessings that he begs for them, are especially two.

1. He begs the gift of spiritual strength, that as they had begun well, and laid a good foundation by believing in Christ, so they might be constant in holding out that profession against all the enemies and oppositions which they met with, and were like to turn them out of the way of righteousness. Thus he prays ver. the 16. *That*
he

he would give you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by the spirit in the inner man.

Those that are wholly under the power of corruption are not so much troubled with persecution and temptation: Satan like a Pyrate seldom sets upon a soul unless like a Ship it be laden with the merchandise of Grace. This was the case with these *Ephesians*. By *Pauls* preaching they had begun well, building on that rock of Ages, and venturing their Immortal Souls on Christ and his Righteousness. But *Paul* now being in prison, false Teachers were among them, vexing the Church, and were like to turn them from the way of truth: God had smitten the shepherd, and the sheep were like to be scattered. Now then is a time to press the duty of perseverance, that as they had begun well, so they might so run that they might obtain.

2. He begs that sovereign means that was only able to confirm and strengthen them in the Service of Christ, and that is Christ himself. That Christ may

dwell in your hearts by Faith.

I shall a little explain the words :

That Christ, that is, whole Christ in both his natures, God and Man.

May dwell, that is, spiritually possess, live and work.

In your hearts, that is, in the inner man, consisting of the Understanding, Will and Affections, which are the principal and chief place of Christs residence, the fort Royal or Castle which Christ chuseth, and above all delights in.

By faith, that is, as the means and instrument whereby we receive and entertain him

There are as many Doctrines offer themselves to us as there are words in this Scripture. And we might note first.

Doct. 1. That the heart is the place of Christs residence.

Doct. 2. Christ is no stranger to Believers, but an in-dweller with them.

Doct. 3. That Faith makes a union between Christ and the Soul.

But I shall wave prolixity, and bring my

my Discourse into a narrower model, casting all into this one Conclusion.

Doct. *That no blessing whatsoever (on this side heaven) can be imagined, that we should more desire than this; That Christ should dwell in our hearts by Faith.*

We find the Apostles affections all in a flame, and he burns with zeal to promote the happiness of his dear *Ephesians*; he bends his knees, and casts himself down at Gods feet, and among all blessings in Heaven and Earth, he can find none better to beg for his young Converts than this.

What the strength of his affections was to them you may see *Chap. I. 16.* where we read, *that he ceased not to give thanks for them, making mention of them always in his prayers.*

Had Paul known any blessing better than this, sure he whose heart was so set upon them, would have begged it for them.

But further, to prove the greatness of this inestimable blessing, read *2 Cor. 6. 16.* where the Apostle enjoyns his

Corinthians the highest pitch of holiness upon this ground: *For what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as he hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

In this Scripture we have a double argument to prove the greatness of this blessing, (1) Christs dwelling in his people.

1. The greatness of the duty that is urged from it, *v. 17. Come forth from among them, and be ye separate, &c.* Now for weighty services, God usually furnishes his people with strongest arguments; as is evident in *Abraham's* case, *Gen. 17. 1.* 'twas high service that God enjoined him, *Walk before me, and be thou perfect.* And high encouragements God gave him, *I am God all-sufficient, &c. Deus jubet & juvat;* God's Commands carry strength with them, whatever *Abraham's* weakness be; yet this supports him, that the everlasting arms are under him, God is all-sufficient both for the work and reward.

'Twas

'Twas hard work too on which God set *Moses* when he sent him with a commission to deliver *Israel* from *Egypt*, and suitable encouragements God gives him; God finds his heart low, and raises it to a height suiting his service, by working no less than three several Miracles to strengthen him; his Rod is turned into a Serpent, his hand is leprous; and the river is turned into blood, *Exod. 4.*

2. A second argument which this Scripture yields us to prove the greatness of this blessing is this, That Christ dwelling in us is but a short abridgment of the Covenant of Grace, for that's presently added, *I will be your God, and you shall be my people.* When we have summed up all those invaluable blessings that are treasured up in the Covenant, we have all in a little, (*viz.*) in Christ dwelling in us, peace, pardon, grace, glory, all is virtually comprehended in this.

2ly. Again, 'tis the very blessing God promises the Saints in Heaven, *Rev. 21. 3.* where *S. John* saw the new Jerusalem

rusalem coming down from God out of Heaven, &c. He heard a voice from heaven, saying, Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, &c. Christs dwelling in us is but Heaven aforehand, or Heaven upon Earth; if God dwell in us here by his Grace, he will dwell with us in glory.

But for our more Methodical prosecution of the point, I shall confine myself to this method.

1. I shall explain it.
2. Confirm; and,
3. Apply it.

For the Explication, I shall do that by answering several Queries in which the sum of the Conclusion lies.

Q. 1. The first is what we are to understand by the heart?

A. Not to trouble our selves with the various acceptations of the word [*heart*] in Scripture, (many of which are impertinent to our purpose) we are to understand (by heart) the Will and the Affections especially, as in the former Discourse; these are the spring
out

out of which are the issues of life, *Prov.* 4. 22. and that good treasure mentioned *Mat.* 12. 24. *But a good man out of the good treasure of his heart, &c.*

2. The next thing to be enquired, is, what we are to understand by Christs dwelling in us ?

A. It's a Metaphorical or figurative speech, to shew that intimacy and holy acquaintance that is between Christ and Believers. Christ is not in the heart as a stranger in an Inn, where he tarries but a night, but as a man dwelling in his own house where he lives, and works, and rules, &c. More particularly, this dwelling of Christ implys these several things.

1. It implys propriety, Christ will never usurp where he hath no right ; no, he never dwells but in his own ; his own he will never lose, and more than his own he will never take ; *All that the Father hath given me shall come to me, Joh. 6. 37.* Satan shall never sit quiet for ever in a soul that belongs to Christ ; though the strong man armed keeps the house, yet a stronger than him-

himself will come and bind him, not one of those that are heirs of the promises shall miscarry; no, *I will ransom them from the Power of the grave, I will redeem them from death, Hos. 13.*

14.

4. Christ's dwelling in believers implies actual possession, a man may have a just right or claim where yet he may not dwell; Christ doth not content himself with a bare right to his redeemed, but he takes actual possession of them; he keeps house in their hearts, *Job. 14. 20. At that day, you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me and I in you.*

Furthermore Christ Jesus may be said to possess believers two ways.

1. By assuming our nature, *When the Word was made flesh, he dwelt among us, Job. 1. 14.* (1) lived and conversed awhile with the sons of men; yea he dwelt in us in as much as he was partaker of flesh and blood with us. And as the fulness of the God-head dwelt in Christ, so Christ too dwells in us.

2. By

2. By communicating to us his Spirit. The Spirit of Christ is the Fountain of all Grace and comfort, and by this Spirit of Christ we have both union and communion with him, *Gal. 2. 20. Christ liveth in me*, Christ is in us as a Principle of life and Grace, active and operative; he is not in the Soul as once he was in the ship asleep, but always inciting, quickening and enlivening his elect who would again become dead in sin, but he acts and excites his own Grace in them.

3. Christ's dwelling in us, means the neereft intimacy that is imaginable; ~~knowing is divine~~ so 'tis in the original, I will indwell in them, *2 Cor. 6. 16.* As if Christ could never have communion enough with his People. Now this sweet and saving intimacy will appear in those things.

1. His People shall know his secrets, *Psal. 25. 14. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant.* The saints are all Gods secretaries; when God intended that fearful overthrow of
Sodom

Sodom, shall I hide from *Abraham* (saies God) the thing that I do? No, *Abraham* was his friend, and as a bosom-friend; He shall know his Councell, such honour have all his saints.

2. He will speak to their hearts, *Hos.* 2. 14. When the hearts of Gods People are so overwhelmed with grief, that men and Angels prove miserable comforters. They may speak to the ear but cannot reach the heart; then Christ alone doth this; *I, even I, am he that doth comfort thee*, &c. *Isa.* 51. 12. Christ speaks such things as make our hearts leap. Thus he spake to the sick-man, *Mat.* 9. 2. *Don be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.* Christ can speak such Words as never man spake, the Words which he speaks are Spirit and life. 'Tis storied of a Peer of this Kingdom that he dyed with joy of an unexpected pardon; how great then is the joy that possesseth a Soul that receives a pardon from God! Such pardoned ones are bid to be glad and shout for joy, *Psal.* 32. 11. And all others flatly forbid to meddle

dle with this joy, *Hof. 9. 1. Rejoyce not, O Israël, for joy as other People, for thou hast gone a-whoring from thy God.*

3. The sweetness and closeness of that intimacy which we have with Christ, by vertue of his dwelling in us, appears by this, that we have all things common with Christ. Christ calls nothing his own that may do us good: all our fresh Springs are in him, if we are Christs, all is ours, *Paul, Apollo, Cephas*, life and death, &c. All Christ's offices and efficacies, his life, death, blood, merit, Spirit; all his advantage to us, yea death it self is gain to believers, *Phil. 1. 21. For me to live is Christ, and to dye is gain.* The Church keeps all her choice presents for Christ, *Cant. 7. vlt.* And Christ bestows all his rarities on his Church.

3. Christ dwelling in us implies his abiding or continual residing in us, in *Isa. the 57. 15.* God is said to inhabit eternity, (1) who only is eternal; wherever Christ dwells he takes up his residence for ever; he saith, this

is my rest for ever, here will I dwell
 &c. Though men may be weary of
 their dwelling how-ever accommodat-
 ed both for necessity and delight;
 yet Christ is never : That's the promise
 he makes his People , *1 Kings 6. 13.*
I will dwell among the children of Israel,
and will not forsake my People Israel.

5. Christs dwelling in us implies his
 preservation of us, every man is bound
 to repair and preserve his own house
 where he dwells, so is Christ: Christ's
 dwelling doth not look like the house
 of the sluggard that drops thorow; no,
 what-ever storms beat on it it stands,
 and is impregnable. That's remarkable
 in *Psal. 6. 7. 2. 3.* *At Salem is his Ta-*
bernacle, and his dwelling at Sion ;
There brake he the arrows of the bow,
 &c. That place is sure of safetie and
 protection where God dwells; as on the
 contrary, Gods departing makes way
 for destruction. We read that the
 Heathens have placed their Security in
 the presence of their idol-Gods. *Tacitus*
 reports of the *Tyrians*, when they
 were besieged by *Alexander*, bound

Her-

Hercules with a golden chain that he should not depart. And the *Romans* were wont by some verses to call off the Tutelary gods out of the Cities which they did besiege. God hath bound himself to us by a Covenant better than a golden chain, that he will never leave us nor forsake us.

Q.3. The third Query is how Christ dwells in the heart by faith?

A. The answer is this, 'Tis the office of Faith to receive Christ Jesus. Christ knocks by his Word and Spirit, and Faith makes haste to open and let him in; it gives Christ the free and full possession of the Soul, and delivers up all into his hand, and to his use. For can two walk together unless they are agreed? We read in *Gen. 30. 6.* *When Lot and Abraham had multiplied their substance, they could not dwell together, and there was strife between their herdsmen*; Christ and we could never have dwelt together; had there been any strife between us; there is no agreement between Christ and Belial. But when Christ comes and dwells in us,

he comes like Noah's Dove, he brings us news of peace purchased by the blood of his Cross. The Psalmist admires the happiness of such as dwell together in unity, though but natural brethren, Psal. 133.1. *Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is, &c.* How good then and pleasant must it be for Christ and us to dwell together! This is our happiness, Christ says of every believing soul as of Sion, *This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, &c.* Psal. 132. 14.

Ref. 2. Such in whom Christ dwells, shall never lose their interest in God by sin or backsliding, for Christ himself will be a continual spring or fountain of life and grace within us, Job. 4. 14. *The water that I shall give you shall be in you a well of living water.* Can we ever die with thirst when we have a fountain within us? no fear of forfeiting our title to that great and glorious inheritance if Christ be in us, he will keep both it for us, and us for it, *he will preserve us by his grace unto his heavenly Kingdom,* 2 Tim. 4. 18.

Ref. 3.

Ref. 3. At Christ dwell in us, he will defend and protect us from all dangers; death and hell have nothing to do where Christ the Lord of life dwells. When *Lazarus* was dead, his sister told Christ, *Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died*, Joh. 11. 21. Christs presence is his peoples security from that second death. Satan may bring up his black Legions, and storm the Castle, but shall never take it. Hear ye whose hearts are habitations for the Lord Christ what your Redeemer saith, *Joh. 14. 30. The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me*, (that is) in me mystical, neither in head nor members.

Ref. 4. If Christ dwell in us, we shall never want either counsel or comfort; his Spirit shall supply us with both. If we want counsel we shall hear a voice behind us, saying, *this is the way walk in it*. He whose name is *Counsellor*, hath not his name for nothings; in our greatest perplexities, this great Counsellor will advise and direct us; for he is made of God to be wisdom to his redeemed.

Again, if we want comfort, he'll revive the drooping spirits of his contrite ones, *Isa. 57. 15.* The Church out of her experience cries out, *that his mouth is as sweet things, Cant. 5. 16.* And the words that he speaks are as life to despondent and dying souls.

Reas. 5. But one thing more : Christ will never leave his dwelling till he bring us to a dwelling-place with himself in glory. This was purchased to us by his death, and prepared for us by his Ascension, *Job. 14. 2. I go to prepare a place for you.* No sooner shall these earthly houses be dissolved, but Christ is presently ready to receive us into everlasting habitations.

Use 1. The Application follows, and let the first Use be of Information. And,

1. It discovers the vain delusion of all hypocrites and formalists, who admit Christ into their mouths, but shut him out of their hearts; this was the Religion of the Pharisees, whose falsity in matters of Gods Worship, Christ Jesus reprehends, *Mat. 15. 8. Well did Isaias prophesie of you, saying, this people*

ple draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from me. 'Tis sad when Christ is near in our mouths, but far from our reins.

2. Learn hence next, That there is nothing lost by giving Christ entertainment. No, 'tis the gain of a Christian; as God blessed *Obed-edom* for entertaining the Ark, so doth he much more bless Believers for entertaining his Son Christ. What glorious guests had just *Lot* when he entertained two Angels! a much more glorious guest hath every one that entertains Christ Jesus; he brings Salvation with him, and so salutes the heart that receives him as he did *Zachens*, *This day is salvation come to thy house*.

3. Learn next what a mystery, or rather miracle there is in the actings of saving Faith, in that it unites Christ and the soul, and brings them to dwell together. Wonder we may, that though Christ, in regard of his humane nature be in Heaven, and we on Earth; yet Faith easily narrows this wide distance

and in an instant possesses the soul with its beloved Jesus. As the soul by vertue of light inlightned with the Sun, doth joyn it self with the body of the Sun, and touch it (after a manner); so the eye of Faith inlightned with the beams of the Spirit which come from the Sun of righteousness, doth joyn and unite it self with Christ Jesus.

Use 2. The next is a use of Trial. If it be so great a blessing to have Christ Jesus dwelling in our hearts, it concerns us all to try whether he dwell in our hearts or no.

Now the tokens of his presence, or evidences of his co-habitation with us, may be these :

1. The heart in which Christ dwells is an humble heart, *Isa. 57. 15.* Christ was a pattern of Humility himself, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of spirit.* And Christ delights to be no-where but in a heart that is like himself. The richer the Ship is laden, the more water it draws, and the lower it sails; so 'tis here: that heart that carries Christ, is laden with more than a gol-

a golden mine, it carries him in whom are hid all spiritual treasures, and all such souls sail low. *Abraham* calls himself dust and ashes; *David*, a worm and no man; great *Paul*, the chiefest of sinners; though every Saint that is his successor, contend still for that title, The most hard-hearted sinner; so Mr. *Bradford* subscribed his Letter.

2. The heart where Christ dwells, is inflamed with the love of God. In cold frozen spirits, or hearts that are luke-warm like *Laodicea*, Christ likes not to be; as the Sun begets heat on inferior bodies by shining on them, so doth Christ the Sun of Righteousness when he ariseth on a soul; though he find our hearts cold, yet he makes them by his spiritual presence burn within us, as it fared with them with whom he journeyed to *Emmaus*, Luk. 24.32. The soul burns with love, and burns with desire to Christ Jesus, that is once united to him, Read *Joh. 14.23*. If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.

As when Christ comes, he comes willing;
 so where he comes he comes welcome.
Mary entertained Christ, and she loved
 him much, and this love discovered it
 self in spending that costly Oyntment
 on his sacred body. There's nothing
 too dear for Christ in his account
 where Christ dwells, but such a one
 says with the Martyr, He is glad he hath
 any thing to lose for Christ; or with the
 Church, whatever good thing he hath,
 he keeps it only for him, *Cant.* 7. 13.

2ly, With love to our Brethren, *If
 we love one another, God dwelleth in us,*
1 Job. 4. 12. God loves to be where
 love is. One observes, That where the
 Devil dwells all is in peace, much
 more where God dwells who is the
 God of peace. If then we find our
 hearts filled with malice and hatred to-
 ward our brethren, we may confident-
 ly conclude God is not in this place;
 the Lamb of God will never lie in a
 Lions den. We read in *Judg.* 9. 23. God
 sent an evil spirit between the house
 of *Abijah* and the men of *Shechem*, a
 spirit of hatred, enmity and division:

This

This is an evil Spirit from the Devil; not from God; where *Satan* dwells he sets all on fire, not with fire that warms, but consumes. And when we give place to wrath we give place to the Devil, *Ephes* 4. 27.

3. The heart wherein Christ dwells, is a holy heart; as no unholy thing shall for ever dwell with him, so neither will Christ dwell with it.

The heart is a Temple, *2 Cor.* 6. 16. *Ye are the Temples of the holy Ghost;* now we know Temples are holy consecrated things: That which is lawful to be done in another place is not lawful to be done in a Temple: we read, *Mark* 11. 16. Christ would not suffer a vessel to be carried thorow the Temple. Neither will he have the hearts of believers made a roade for sin; no, *If any man defiles the Temple of God, him will God destroy;* *1 Cor.* 3. 17.

4. The heart where Christ dwells lives in a sweet subjection to Christ and his Laws. *His commands are not grievous, but his yoke is easy and his burden light;* Christ dwells no-where, but where he is acknowledged and serve

serves as a King; for God hath appointed him both for a Prince and a Saviour, *Mat. 5. 31.* The Government is laid by God upon his shoulders, and he makes every thought to stoop and come into subjection to himself. Well then, where men serve not the Lord but their lusts, set up their corruptions, and cry down Christ; in such hearts Christ never dwells. But a Soul possessed by Christ, sets Christ in the Throne, and cryes up Christ, as the Jews did *Cesar*; We have no King but him.

5. The heart in which Christ dwells is a tender heart. *Such as tremble at Gods Word. Isa. 57. 15.* A hard senseless heart is a dead heart. And as the Angels to the Women that sought Christ in the sepulchre; So we may say in this case, *Why seek ye the living among the dead?* Christ is a Spring and a Fountain of life to every believing Soul: *Because I live ye shall live also.* Now where there is life there is sense; dead men nor fear any thing nor feel it, but living men do both; they feel the least guilt, and fear

fear the wrath and anger of God; they are sensible of every miscarriage, and their heart smites them on the commission of the least sin, as *David* did when he cut off but the lap of *Saul's* garment. Such a heart shews who is in it (to wit) that Christ dwells in't: such a heart we read was in good *Josiah*, whose heart was so tender that he wept but at the reading of the Law, *2 Kings* 22. 19.

Use 3. This should cheer the hearts of all believers: what unspeakable comfort doth this bring to every one whose heart is a habitation for Christ Jesus! how doth Christ honour you, that when the World scorns you, Christ crowns you; when men shame you, the Son of God dwells in you. Surely this blessing affords matter of Spiritual ravishment to every Soul that has given Christ Jesus entertainment. Wise *Solomon* admired both Gods mercy and his Peoples happiness at once, upon this very reason, *2 Chron.* 6. 18. Is it true indeed that God will dwell with man on earth! what,

what infinite Majesty fall in love with misery ! God dwell with man ! heaven and earth meet in one Person ! ye righteous, let it not deject you, that your excellency is not conspicuous in the Worlds eye. The Churches beauty is within ; and herein she is like her beloved. Christ himself to outward appearance was but a root out of a dry ground ; no form or comeliness was in him ; therefore he was despised and rejected of men. Your life is a hidden life, like in this to the Ark, that without was covered with skins, sullied and weather-beaten with storms and tempests ; but within, was stored with gold and rich rarities. God seeth not as man seeth, there's a time at hand when God will turn your in-side out ; and though now you ly among the pots, yet shall ye be covered with silver-Wings and your feathers like gold.

Use 4. Lastly, Be exorted to the Apostles Prayer, to add your own practise. This is the one thing necessary, with what holy zeal and diligence should

Should we do this work, and drive this great design! how restless should we be in this pursuit, to get Christ to dwell in us!

2. But how?

A. I shall only Answer this query and conclude.

And here several things must be done both for the getting Christ into the heart, and the keeping of him there.

1. The heart must be prepared for Christ, *Mal. 2. 1.* The Prophet speaking of *John Baptist*, saith, that he should *prepare the way for him.* And *Isa.* speaking of the same Messenger adds; *Every mountain shall be brought low, and every valley be filled up, and every crooked thing shall be made plain, Isa. 43. 4.* All this must be done as a preparation for Christ.

As where Princes are expected, the highways are cleered, and all passages are facilitated that they may pass both with ease and honour; so we must prepare for Christ Jesus.

1. Mountains must be brought low; (that is.) the lofty heart must be abased, and every high thought must stoop
and

Christ: we must be vile in our own eyes, learn to abhor our selves with Job, loath our own sins and our own righteousness also, and count it dung and loss to win Christ. Christ designs his own Glory in condescending to dwell with sinful men; and Christ's Glory and the creature's cannot be set up together.

2 Vallies must be filled; some hearts are too low for Christ, they mind earthly things, and therefore are unfit for the receiving of so glorious a guest: *Lift up therefore your heads, O ye gates, and then the King of Glory shall come in, Psal. 24.* as the Church is described in *Rev. 12.* with the moon under her feet, and then she is cloathed with the Sun and hath a Crown of twelve Stars on her head; so must every member of the Church trample upon all earthly and sublunary vanities; and set our hearts on heaven, where our true Treasure is. It were a disparagement to divine blessings, should they be bestowed on them that

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peans do not use to be call before
twine.

3. Crooked things must be made straight, we must have no crooked aimes nor close designs in the Service of God. The sons of Jacob must be all like their Father, plain-hearted men, our studies, strength, time, and state, must be all dedicated to the Lord, *such as turn aside to crooked ways*, the Lord threatens to lead them out with the workers of iniquity, *Psal. 125. 5.*

4. Lastly, rough ways must be made plain, the oyle of Grace must supple the rough and rugged temper of our Spirits. 'Tis said of Nabal, he was so churlish a man could not speak to him; such hearts are not fit for Christ. Christ by Grace sweetens the Temper of our Souls, takes off that fierceness and austerity that is in them by nature. *The Lion and the Lamb ly down together, and there's nothing shall destroy or hurt in all his holy mountain*. If we would have Christ dwell in our hearts, we must keep our hearts pure;
for

for a nasty lodging is lothsome to him. With what care do we keep our Temples, cleansing them continually that there be no filth found in them! These Spiritual Temples must never be sullied with sin, nor defiled with iniquity. This is the condition upon which Christ promises to dwell in us, *2 Cor. 6. 17. Touch no unclean thing, and then I will dwell in you.*

3. Take heed of grieving the Spirit of God, by resisting it's motions; or crossing the sweet and saving operations thereof. There's a sad Scripture in *Mat. 12. 44. When the unclean Spirit is cast out and returneth, &c.* He brings with him seven other Spirits worse than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there. Oh deal courteously with Christ, offend your own Souls rather than offend him! Study we must to comply with his commands, and carry our selves so exactly, that in nothing we grieve his Spirit, nor make him weary of his habitation.

4. Lastly, sith Christ dwells in the heart by Faith, labour to prize this
pre-

precious Grace, for the procuring of which these several rules should heedfully be observed.

1. Acquaint your selves with your own hearts, and you will find such a stock of infidelity in them, as may for ever confound us. Though God who is faithfulness it self hath infinitely stooped to lost man, and for his security hath ratified the Covenant by his Word, his Oath, and Seals; *yet alas there is in us all by nature a heart of unbelief*, Heb. 3. 12. So that upon experience we shall find we are no more able by nature to believe the Gospel than to obey the Law : Alas, we fear no more than we feel, and believe no more than we see, when we come to seize on Christ, and take hold of the promise, Oh with what a faint and trembling hand do we receive them !

2. Labour to see the rare excellency and efficacy of Faith, what is it, but a Christians life while he is below? without it we cannot move one foot heaven ward ; whatsoever is not of

H

Faith

Faith is Union. This is that which brings in Christ into the Soul, it makes us one with Christ now, and the union that is made by Faith between Christ and the Soul now shall never be dissolved till we enjoy him in glory. *For the end of our Faith is the Salvation of our Souls;* 1 Pet. 1. 9.

3. Bind your selves to a constant and conscionable attendance to the Word and Ordinances of God, *For Faith comes by hearing,* Rom. 10. 17. As death first entered by this doer, so doth life; hear and your Soul shall live, this is that Manna on which we must live till we come to Canaan: As Gideons Fleece was wet when the ground about it was dry, so God usually waters the Souls of them both with grace and comfort that wait on his Ordinances, when others that condemn them are strangers to both. We read in *Act. 13. 48. When the Apostles preached, as many of the Gentiles as were ordained to eternal life believed.*

4. Be convinced of the admirable
and

and infinite Excellencies that are in God, as his Power whereby he is able to save, Mercy whereby he is willing to save, and Faithfulness whereby he is bound to save all them that come to him by Christ Jesus. Now as ignorance is the mother of Unbelief, so knowledge is the foundation of Faith; he that will come to God must first know that God is, and that he is a faithful rewarder of all that come to him, *And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee.* Psal. 9. 10.

5. Under all assaults and temptations use your selves to look up unto Christ, who is the author and finisher of Faith; whatever Grace we want fetch it of him, who hath in him all treasures, and can give us Grace for Grace. Whatever weight either of sin or suffering we are oppressed with, *look we up to Jesus,* Heb. 12. 2. And 'tis no more but look to him and we shall be saved.

6. Lie at Gods feet, and be instant in prayer with the Father of Mercies,

and never give him rest till he create this saving Grace in you; that God that hears the Ravens when they cry will hear you. O could we bemoan our dead-heartedness to believe and rest in his all-sufficiency, whose power is not limited, but can as well give the life of Grace, as the life of Nature, we should not for ever be denied, but should at last feel this heavenly birth spring within us.

And to close all, if the work be difficult, the fruit will be an abundant recompence, our labour will not be in vain in the Lord. Christ will never be in debt to any for his entertainment, his presence will quiet our hearts, purge our Consciences, subdue our corruptions, fortifie us against all evils, guide us by his grace; till he bring us to glory. What do we mean then that we do not stir up our selves to take hold of him: while Christ knocks let us set open the everlasting door, &c. Invite him as *David*, Psal. 132. 8. *Arise O Lord, and come into thy Sanctuary.*

ary. If Christ seem strange, constrain him, and say as they in *Luk.* 24. 29. *Abide with us*, feast him with the best as *Levi* did, *Lev.* 5. 29. Say as the Church, all our choice-services we have kept only for thee. In short, set up the *Psal-mists* resolution, to give your eyes no rest, nor suffer the temples of your heads to have any quiet till you have found a place in your hearts of the Lord, and an habitation for the mighty God of *Jacob*.

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